

## **Message from the Chief**

### **Chief's Memo – July 3, 2006**

#### ***No Fireworks at the Capitol – Governor Schwarzenegger Signs Budget Bill SFM & CDF Law Enforcement Clamp Down on Fireworks Statewide***



There were no fireworks over the budget this year. The 2006-07 Budget has been approved by the Legislature and signed by Governor Schwarzenegger before the beginning of the fiscal year. This was the first time in the last six years that a budget has been signed by the July 1<sup>st</sup> Constitutional deadline.

As it stands, CDF was not required to make any General Fund reductions, and was successful in receiving additional funding for specific projects and employee compensation costs. Highlights of the new budget are as follows:

- \$30m in state budget to address statewide compensation (inversion and compaction) issues. Staff is working with DPA and Finance on CDF specific issues.
- \$932k State Emergency Telephone Number Account to complete implementation of the computer-aided dispatching (CAD) system.
- \$1,043k and 7.5 PY funded by Capital Outlay funding to address staffing shortfalls related to department-retained Capital Outlay projects, allowing more projects to be initiated.
- \$500k State Fire Marshal Licensing and Certification Fund for disposal of illegal fireworks seized by state or local entities.
- \$360k and 3.0 PY Reimbursements for increased staffing in the OSFM to conduct construction and code inspections as mandated.
- \$37,358k General Fund and \$4,455 Reimbursements for Employee Compensation adjustments, including IRA POT.
- \$5,000k General Fund and 33.6 PY for Public Safety Workforce Continuity, allowing for increased hiring and training efforts to offset increased attrition.

- \$2,382k Forest Resources Improvement Fund, \$6,580k General Fund, and 19.0 PY for Forest Resources Improvement Fund Program Restoration.
- \$3,000k Proposition 40 Bond Fund and 1.2 PY for increased Urban Forestry grants.
- \$1,463k General Fund and 18 PY to shift CALFED administration from the California Bay-Delta Authority to CDF.
- \$14.2 million General Fund for 4 continuing projects which include replacement of 9 communication facilities and addressing infrastructure deficiencies at 3 emergency response facilities.
- \$1.6 million General Fund for a new project to replace four communication facilities.
- \$119.1 million in Bond Funds for 5 new projects, which include relocation of the Southern Region Headquarters, construction and renovation at the Academy, replacement of 2 conservation camps, and improvements at various forest fire stations in the Northern Region.

The Budget Bill does contain a provision for 2006/07 General Fund reductions, however, at this time, it does not appear that this will be implemented with across-the-board departmental cuts. Staff will continue to work with the Administration to monitor this issue.

### **Fireworks Enforcement Activities**

While there were no fireworks over the budget, the CDF/Office of the State Fire Marshal and CDF Law Enforcement have been engaged in a battle against illegal fireworks being smuggled into California.

Last week, I participated in a press conference at South Ops in Riverside, along with other local and state fire and law enforcement agencies. The press conference was to educate the public about the dangers of illegal fireworks and to warn them about our enforcement actions.

As of June 28<sup>th</sup>, over 14 tons of illegal fireworks were confiscated in 10 days by a specialized statewide law enforcement task force. A special operation is blocking the transportation of illegal fireworks from Nevada into California and will continue its work through the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. This year officers have already seized more than 94 tons of illegal fireworks, preventing these dangerous materials from reaching the streets of California communities.

The state has zero tolerance when it comes to illegal fireworks. This operation is geared toward preventing life-threatening injuries. One thing is for sure; the

fireworks that have been confiscated can no longer pose a fire threat to Californians or send an injured child to the emergency room.

The haul that has already been confiscated includes illegal firecrackers, roman candles, and mortar shells, the large aerial fireworks used at professional fireworks shows which cause many of the fires and injuries attributed to illegal fireworks.

The special operation began the weekend of June 17 and will continue through July 4<sup>th</sup>. People found with illegal fireworks will be cited for illegal possession and the fireworks will be confiscated. Anyone found to have in excess of 17 ounces collective of black powder are charged with a felony. As of June 28<sup>th</sup>, more than 75 felony and misdemeanor citations have been issued.

California fire and law enforcement agencies are making a difference in the fight against illegal fireworks. Enforcement actions are drawing attention in Pahrump, Nevada, the source for much of the illegal fireworks being smuggled into California. <http://www.pahrumpvalleytimes.com/2006/06/30/news/fireworks.html>

With 2 of the final 3 days completed on this weekend's enforcement activities, the task force had stopped an additional 200 vehicles at the checkpoint on highway 127 resulting in 74 more citations and the seizure of an additional 7500 lbs of fireworks. The quantity of fireworks being confiscated is remaining approximately the same, however, the number of citations has gone up. This was expected as we are seeing more personal use quantities, as we get closer to the 4th. This adds to the total for earlier enforcement actions last week.

I want to thank all of those involved in this extraordinary effort to keep Californian's safe, and wish all employees a safe and enjoyable Independence Day. If you want to enjoy fireworks with your family for the holiday, please do so at one of the many professional displays throughout the State.

Regards,



Ruben Grijalva, Chief  
Director / State Fire Marshal

### **State Fire Marshal**

State Fire Marshal staff is gearing up for 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Chief Hugh Council spoke to the media at the annual news conference in Sacramento. Fire and Life Safety Staff is contacting the pyrotechnic operators to discuss the shows they will be inspecting. Fire Engineering is busy with media calls and calls from the fire service regarding fireworks sales and safety.

**Southern Region**

The Southern Region and I would like to thank Jack Kitay for working with the San Diego Unit on the Travel Expense Claims and other unique accounting issues that arose during CDF's participation on the Martir Incident in Baja. His help was invaluable to insure that the TECs submitted contained the correct rates and conversions from pesos to dollars. (No one but Jack knew that the per diem rates for out of country travel differed from the rates for out of state travel).

Thanks to Bill Robertson and Tom Lutzenberger for participating in the two-day tour of the San Diego Unit. The Unit took them to several stations, La Cima Camp, Ramona Air Base, Gillespie Field and Unit Headquarters. During the tour, the Unit employees shared the issues they were facing and showed Bill and Tom the impacts of several years with insufficient O&E funding.